

# the *Emily*

MANIPULATED



***The last Emily of the year!***

Eating Disorders Awareness Week is February 3 -9, so we dedicated part of this edition to articles and poetry dealing with this issue. Although not all women develop eating disorders, most women in our society are affected by the same pressures that cause them. Namely, the pressures put on women in our society to look perfect no matter what the cost to their psychological, emotional and physical health. The media has, in the past as well as today, exerted considerable influence over the image we have of ourselves and of others. For example, most of the pornography that is created for men consistently objectifies women, and creates unrealistic ideas about women and beauty.

1996-97 being the fifteenth year of *Emily* production I am forced to wonder how much has changed. Are we any further ahead? Thanks to the many many wonderful women who have been active in organizations such as the *Emily*, we have definitely made progress in the last decade and a half. However, this does not mean we're finished: there are still many aspects of this society that contribute to the exploitation of women.



For info on who is responsible for this offensive ad come to the women's centre.

***Why 'Emily'?***

In 1982, the UVic Women's collective put out its first ever newsletter, *The Emily*. The name was chosen in recognition of the many Emily's who have contributed to the feminist cause: Emily Bronte, Emily Dickinson, Emily Carr, Emily Murphy, Emily Pankhurst...as well as the many others, unnamed, who have fought for equality over the years.

But why is the *Emily* important? 15 years ago, the collective felt the need to reach out to more women on campus, and chose this newsletter as the means to open up lines of communication. As the editors wrote in the first issue: "although communicating is essential to the feminist movement, we often become so wrapped up in our lives that we fail to listen to each other." That is no less true today. The *Emily* remains the ideal space for women to explore issues of interest and importance.

Next *Ain't I a Woman* production Mar. 1-2  
Bring all ideas and submissions to the  
Women's Centre  
(SUB B107)

***The Emily Staffbox*****Editors**

Kristin Atwood  
Carmen Schaedeli

**Production Gals**

Kristin Atwood  
Becky Black  
Elise Mitchell  
Carmen Schaedeli  
Brenda Simmers

**Contributors**

Kristin Atwood  
British Columbia Eating  
Disorders Assoc.  
Jenny Fielding  
Melanie Golder  
Shona Renay Harason  
Elise Mitchell  
Kim Watson  
Gayle Yamamoto

\*Special thanks to Mary Vallis  
for working on a Saturday

**Love Yourself! Boycott the Beast!!**

The cover for this edition of *The Emily* was designed by Kim Watson and Melanie Golder of the UVic School of Social Work, as part of a project to create awareness about the media's manipulation of the human body. The smaller images were distorted using a computer program available anywhere relatively cheaply. The creators believe that the media is largely responsible for the poor body image many people have. This poster illustrates that a picture is just a picture, not reality...if such obvious distortions can be done with a home computer in someone's basement, imagine the technology that is in the hands of the beastly beauty industry!



# The Business of Bleeding

Brenda Simmers

Women buy close to one hundred percent of all feminine hygiene products. Eighty-five million women in the United States and Canada are within menstruating age (12-50). We are the market (Armstrong and Scott 8-9). This is important in understanding the need for feminine hygiene companies to control women's attitudes towards their bodies. Being a multi-million dollar industry, it is in their best interests to perpetuate certain attitudes about menstruation. This is done mainly through advertising, which plays on, and reinforces negative attitudes about menstruation. These companies effectively silence all discussion, with their emphasis on secrecy and discreetness. When there is no dialogue, it is hard to examine environmental or health risks. It is difficult to implement alternatives, when there is silence.

A woman spends about two thousand and six hundred dollars on tampons in lifetime. Times this by eighty-five million menstruating women in America, and you have a multi-million dollar industry.

Several women I have talked to, have pointed to cultural beliefs about menstruation, as responsible for the silence that surrounds bleeding. Menstruation is seen as a taboo. It is not something to be discussed publicly, and especially not with men. However, cultural attitudes do not exist in a vacuum. They have to be constantly fed and reinforced. The largest and most harmful factor influencing menstrual attitudes today is the male-dominated, multi-million dollar feminine hygiene industry.

Tambrands, which makes Tampax, has been around for over sixty years. They are the market leader world wide, accounting for fifty-five percent of the total sales of tampons, and are sold in over one hundred and fifty countries ([Tampax.com](http://Tampax.com)). Tampax is listed as the sixtieth top selling grocery item in the US in 1995, receiving forty-three million dollars in sales. This amount of control commands an awful lot of silence.

Their influence also determines the price of their product. An average box of thirty-two tampons costs between five and six dollars, depending on where you buy it. If you add it up, a woman spends about two thousand and six hundred dollars on tampons in lifetime (MM poster).

Times this by eighty-five million menstruating women in America, and you have a multi-million dollar industry.

Ninety percent of the feminine hygiene industry is controlled by three corporations — Tambrands, Playtex, and Johnson and Johnson. It is an industry created for women, however executive positions are dominated by men. Tambrands has only one female senior executive. In the Tambrands Corporate, there are three women for every nine men, and only two women are on the board of twelve (Houppert).

Feminine hygiene companies exert enormous influence over women's perception of menstruation. The primary tool for achieving this is advertising. For example, one Tampax commercial used the slogan, "So Compact, that it fits in the palm of your hand." The commercial showed a beautiful, confident, young woman discretely handing an equally beautiful, confident, young woman a tampon, as they passed on the stairs at a formal dance. The message — using tampons allows you to fully participate in life. Yet the secrecy surrounding the exchange emphasizes the uncleanliness, the necessity to hide evidence of your menstruation.

Tampax plays on this by showing active women, wearing white clothing, who are not hindered at all by their periods. By using tampons, it is suggested that women will gain "peace of mind" from "the hygienic crisis of menstrual flow" (Havens and Swenson 92). They no longer will be hindered in any capacity to take part fully in their day to day lives. They can go swimming, horseback riding, or cycling. After all, "Trust is Tampax" (Houppert). Similar tactics are used when advertising menstrual pads. Discreteness is emphasized by indicating the invisibility of the pad, even under tight clothing (Havens and Swenson 91-92).

To further stigmatize menstruation, we have the wrap and toss bags, which suggest that menstruation is dirty. Thus the need to dispose of the product as quickly, and discreetly as possible — for no one is to know you are menstruating. The bag allows secrecy, as now no one will have to have the misfortune to come across a dirty pad in a garbage can. The threat of menstruation is neatly contained. Thus, millions of pads and tampons are thrown away every year. If women are told their blood is unclean, are they going to be open to alternatives that force them to deal directly with their blood?

As if the feminine hygiene industry isn't making enough money off telling women to be ashamed of their bodies, now there are panty liners, that tell women they can feel fresh everyday. Now we can have "protection" from our monthly physiological changes. So instead of trying to understand the natural processes that our body goes through each month, we are encouraged to see this process as interfering with our daily well-being. "Protection every day is advocated in order to feel confident and clean" (Havens and Swenson 94-95). Liz Armstrong and Adrienne Scott point out that, "This sort of 'information' feeds the notion that women are in a perpetual state of uncleanliness" (9).

*Instead of trying to understand the natural processes that our body goes through each month, we are encouraged to see this process as interfering with our daily well-being.*

Throughout time, these companies have erased the networks among women, and created a linear dialogue between women and the company. Women presently rely on a male-dominated industry to teach them how to take care of their bodies. Women have been separated from their bodies. They have been taught to see their natural cycle as an "inconvenience". This view only benefits the feminine hygiene industry that makes millions of dollars off women's "inconvenience" each year.

With the amount of stigma that is attached to menstruation, many women find it difficult to talk about it openly. What this does is stifle dialogue among women that would potentially undermine the use of such disposable products. Without dialogue there can be no freedom from supermarkets. In silence, there are no answers to unasked questions.

## Further Reading:

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- Errico, Jenn, Sluchinski, Laurie, and Anna Swanson. *Menstrual Madness Poster*. 1996. (presently displayed in the Women's Centre)
- Havens, Beverly, and Ingrid Swenson. "Imagery Associated With Menstruation In Advertising Targeted To Adolescent Women." *Adolescence*. 23(1988):89-97.
- Houppert, Karen. "Pulling the Plug On The Sanitary Protection Industry." *Village Voice*. Feb. 7 1995. (<http://critpath.org/l/tracy/spot.html>)
- Koe, Susan. "Menstrual Cycle of Trash." *Blue Stocking*. Winter 1995. (<http://www.teleport.com/bluesoc/menstr.html>)
- Laws, Sophie. *Issues of Blood*. London: MacMillian Press, 1990.
- M.O.O.N.W.I.T. Collective. (<http://www.littleblue.com/moonwit>)
- Tampax. (<http://www.tampax.com>)



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# poetry...

## The Damned Allusion (Bulimia)

Along a green void,  
life journeys  
the hindered centipede,  
With each step a lethal swathe,  
she concisely cloaks and cloths,  
To veil the real,  
Freeze vanity to feel,  
the buttered sun that saturates  
the skin's  
warmth of touch; transformed to stone disgust,  
loathes and labors the tired self.

Hibernates  
in a cold, concealed, cocoon of hate  
to wantingly wingingly change.  
Change.  
derobe and flare  
in a burst.  
a fiery flame of hues  
but with each ignited indigo  
devalued, dulled  
her burning passions extinguished,  
rung in a damp twisted turn of thought  
washed out in a watery waved mirror.  
Distorts,  
disfigures rippled fragments,  
failing to form, to fit the deeply desired puzzle.

And so remains the green,  
now rot and greyed  
for with each breath,  
a purge  
of life, of love, of limb  
crumbles into the void  
of the damned allusion:  
that casts the curse to self deny  
that bounds the wings and blinds the eyes,  
that feeds the quest to be the billboard  
butterfly  
that sickens the soul  
to, in time, dim and die.

Anonymous



# poetry...

## Cycle

I have reached my ebb tonight.  
That prospect of life flows  
Within and out to stain.

A crimson slash between footfalls  
Echoes the loss of moonlight  
Tonight.  
I call "return!"  
To no avail.

And with weakled steps  
I shadow these streets  
Trembling  
Angered  
By the thought of creation.

It knocks me down,  
Though by and by my senses  
Grow stronger,  
And I could revel in the height  
If not for the grief slowly invading,  
The exhaustion pounding at my temple,  
The shake of my hand,  
And the ache of my back...

A cycle always vaguely present  
flowing, constantly reminding  
And accusing - my duty as a woman...  
Denying my slavery to the new moon  
I fight with faltering steps tonight,  
Only to collapse and rock,  
Then sleep fitfully

KRISTIN ATWOOD

i like you in my bed

"this is my favorite spot"  
you say,  
then kiss  
the space between my hip bone and ribs.  
this too is your "favorite spot"  
just past my hip,  
where the skin sinks and dips before the soft flesh of my stomach.  
tongue traces the curve  
to my navel downward burrowing in  
you finger my flesh  
slip into me  
parting my body to make room for you.  
the rapture of my flesh  
strokes my soul  
all night  
till early morning  
naked and raw before you  
i flower  
it is this loving that lifts me high  
and this my lover,  
is a tribute to you.

Shona Renay Harasin

# Frankly, My Pink Lady.

To write for myself for a few for what's inside.

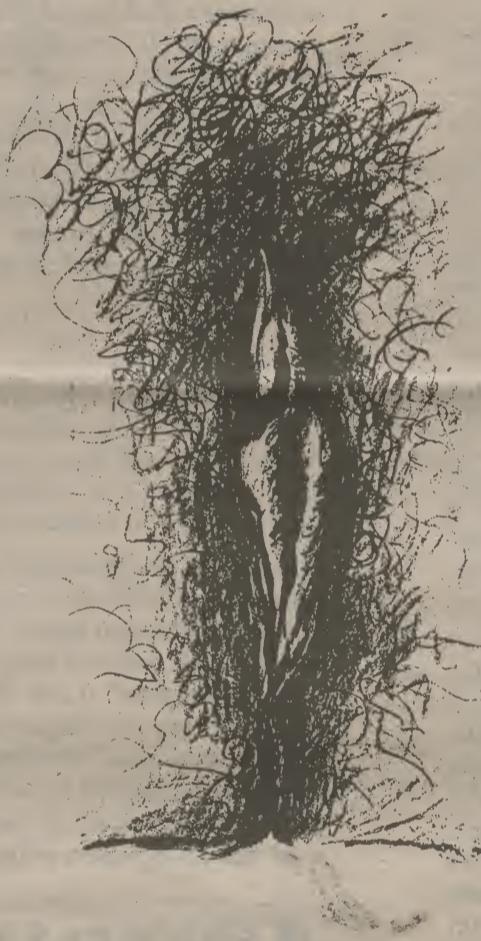
As I sat reading my feet go colder and colder.  
Slowly, subconsciously I made the decision to have a shower.

I am a bath person.  
A great feel of hot water on my feet ahh! Nice massage on those breast  
feeding lowering, young breasts of mine.  
Agh! wait all this water is going down and away from my warm  
absorbent, white calling out skin.  
Come back here.  
down the drain, the drain-ahhh. the luxury of wasting so much water  
I must save it! I must have a bath, Yippee!

Relax in the warmth of my bath. The apartment is just about cold soooo a little treat why not- The 3 honey buns other great treats, as my special Palmero and Preugia coffee! mm- treat day.  
I've got the water hot. I'm wondering if it would be too hot on my flesh I think and struggle for the words I want to choose- I think of my Pink Lady, I think she must be from the succulent family cactus, plant.  
I think of the women, the Pink Lady I brought my opened flower shaped green life.  
Ahh! I have found the words for my clitoris and vagina and labias-Lips my fresh pink

in this earth  
earth bound flower  
and opened and  
Sky  
she never sees and

As the tub reaches the water is flowing over and over and over my so is water flowing out water arrives and reaches the top of the



pink Lady-Yes, the water is

tumbling  
giggles before their  
themselves

boundwomen with her  
turned upward  
reaching for the sky

never sees her

last inch of the edge and  
spread pink lady cunt,  
the metal flower where the  
tub-

The sound I make is beautiful different most every time and the orgasm  
a gift from the tap Goddess- mmm  
this orgasm was like a good perfect solid gushing meal it fills me  
and satiates me and reminds me and thanks and gives to me  
A good feeling- a Fine good feeling

I could stop writing there, but I wonder as I sit and as I had laid afterwards floating in the warmth of the too clean water, what the great variety of other people sharing this apartment building with  
hear                  and                  think

when they see me. I imagine if and possibly do they hear the truth,  
desperation, hunger Joy  
in the voice I have when my Pink Lady yells Yippiee!!!!  
and is unearthing and flys rises to the meet the weight  
of the falling water connection flow-imagine what kind of a wo  
we would live in if we  
listened and heard  
one another. coming coming. into ecstacy and pure  
happy bliss?

S.L.

# Pornography and Sex in

Elise Mitchell

I'm sitting here, slightly dishevelled, drinking cherry Kool-aid and thinking about pornography. I'm quite literally surrounded by it at the moment; the stuff's in great piles around my chair. I've got it all neatly segregated, mind you; dirty magazines in one pile, trashy novels in another, while the more sophisticated literary anthologies of erotica are a little to one side. There is also, as is inevitable with such a controversial subject, a stack of somewhat impenetrable academic books on pornography (all, incidentally, citing different theories as 'correct'). So, along with being dishevelled, I'm also confused. So let's all start at the very beginning, with the oh-so cliched (but very useful) dictionary definition.

Pornography, as defined in my somewhat lame dictionary, is "Writings, pictures, films, etc. depicting sexual activity with the intention of arousing sexual desire." Hm. So, what's wrong with that? Sex is a good thing, yes? I think so. My friends think so. You too, I'm sure. There are, as aforementioned, many many sexually explicit materials available in our permissive society. We like sex, we like looking at pictures of and reading about sex. Where, if you'll pardon the pun, is the beef?

"The model sits cross-legged on the floor, head bewitchingly bent. Long silky hair tumbles over her shoulders, brushing her pearls. The mouth, half-open, is ripely sensual. Eyes heavy with mascara look directly at the viewer, suggesting faint promise and desire. Her lace-edged skirt, ingeniously caught up by one raised arm, reveals a tantalising glimpse of white panties. The model is about four years old." Fredelle Maynard, The Girl Child as Sex Object

Worldwide, children are kidnapped and sexually and physically assaulted while the camera is rolling to satisfy this demand. With the advent of the Internet as a worldwide communications tool, child pornography has become more widely available than ever before. It's very easy to find newsgroups on the subject; they have 'pedophilia' or 'young' in the title. There are also numerous chat rooms on irc, with similar titles, easily found and accessed. Pedophiles use these public areas to make contact with other pedophiles in order to exchange pictures and experiences. Sex stories with juvenile participants are common in erotica groups (although most articles do have disclaimers at the top warning those offended by sexual activity involving children). Anyone can find child pornography online, including children.

Unfortunately, it's nearly impossible to control anything on the Internet, child pornography included, because of its size. It's also international, so any attempt at legislation has resulted in public uproar. Laws vary from country to country (In Sweden, for example, possession of child pornography is legal). Also, suppressing any kind of material is censorship, a direct opposition to freedom of speech, a debate which arises constantly around pornography of any kind. Nevertheless, there are some organizations that attempt to police some portion of the net. If you do see child

*From murder and torture down to shoving, violence is a vital part of some pornography.*

pornography online and want to report it, the site <http://www.nickthellama.com/campaign/> has a link to either the RCMP or the FBI.

Child pornography is illegal in Canada; it's written in the Criminal Code. However, it remains widely consumed here, as the recent seizure of hundreds of photos from an Ontario man proves. It's the main type of pornography that Customs officers look out for when they search people crossing the border. However, they also enforce the rest of Canada's fairly stringent pornography laws. So what's illegal? Children, animals, and violence, mainly. It is illegal to bring any pornographic picture depicting coercion, ridicule, or degradation of any human being. No fisting, secretions, necrophilia, or incest is allowed. And you'll all be pleased to know that pictures of removal of any parts of the human body is a strict no-no in our country. Doesn't that make you feel better? It's certainly a step forward from the 1970s, when the film 'Snuff' was played in Toronto theatres. This film, according to Susan Cole, was "a repulsive shred of celluloid which, its producers claimed, featured the real murder of a real woman as sexually titillating entertainment." Though the film was later revealed to be a hoax, this did and does present some disturbing ideas. First of all, real snuff films do exist, where real women are killed in a sexualized context. Clodagh Corcoran, an Irish feminist and writer, describes a snuff movie she watched:

*I watched a man participate in the act of sex with a woman, and during that act he plunged a large hunting knife into her stomach and cut her open from vagina to breast. He then withdrew the knife and stuck it into her left hand, removing the first joints from three fingers, which fell from the bed. The woman's eyes remained open, she looked at the knife and said 'Oh god, not*

me'. It took her approximately three minutes to die. The camera was left running. The film was then canned and put on the commercial market as entertainment." Pornography, the new terrorism.

This is harsh. I felt physically ill when I read it too; I still do. The plain facts are, though, that these things happen. Think of Kristin French and Leslie Mahaffy. Their death must have been no less terrifying. Paul Bernardo recorded their torture and rape on video for posterity; and there is no doubt that some people would pay a lot of money to see those tapes. If he hadn't been arrested, he would likely have sold or traded those tapes to other rapists and murderers. As it is, it's likely that there are black-market copies circulating.

These are extreme cases, but the fact remains that they do exist. From murder and torture down to shoving, violence is a vital part of some pornography. It's not difficult to see the connection between this kind of explicit material and rape statistics. This is why violent pornography is illegal in Canada; it is an obvious bid to keep violent images of women out of general circulation.

However, pornography of U.S. manufacture is still allowed into Canada, under the dubious designation of 'erotica'. According to Canada's Criminal Code, erotica is the "depiction in a sexual context of for the purpose of sexual stimulation of the viewer, of a human sexual organ, a female breast or the human anal region." (Cole, 77). What this covers is magazines like Playboy and Penthouse, which also attempt to write hard-hitting articles on such vital things as prison reform.

These magazines are, ultimately, much more controversial than real hard-core videos or pictures. The airbrushing and the semi-intelligent patter of the women, who are of a uniform inanity, make the magazine less immediately offensive. However, this makes them all the more insidious, and viewpoints towards them are often bitterly opposing. On the one hand, it is possible to see them as harmless; occasional entertainment for horny men, education for young boys, etc. It's all in good fun, right? Another viewpoint is that all 'erotica' is negative, teaching the objectification of women and that 'pussy' is a disposable commodity. It also could raise unreasonable expectations on the part of men about physical beauty in women, contributing to the work that Vogue and Cosmopolitan (often softcore pornography themselves) do. Altogether, however, they can hardly be inducement to rape. There are also many ads for sexual 'aids'; vibrators, dildoes, cock rings, and knock-out drugs.

Well, not for the first half of the magazine, anyway. Once you're through the tasteful, soft-focus pictorials and the pseudo-journalism, the magazine is given over to phone-sex numbers and sleazy video ads. Words which did not appear in the first half of the magazine, such as 'slut', 'slit', 'ram', 'stuff', 'nymphos', etc. are out in full force. There are also many ads for sexual 'aids'; vibrators, dildoes, cock rings, and knock-out drugs. Yes, that's right, knock-out drugs. I was totally shocked, browsing through Penthouse, when I discovered a small ad on the Leisure Emporium page:

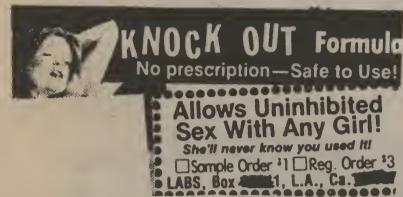
## Responsible Writting

What do you like? Do you prefer pictures or written material? Do you enjoy mainstream pornography or underground erotica? What strange fantasies do you have when you're alone? How, if ever, do you achieve these fantasies?

Think about it. There's an entire industry out there that caters to the male answers to those questions. The female demand for explicit materials is growing, and is being heard by mainstream male pornographers and female eroticists alike. Where do you turn, pornography or erotica? Erotica is defined by Clodagh Corcoran as 'sexually explicit material based on equality'. The editor of the Herotica 4 anthology, Marcy Sheiner, states that it's time to reclaim the word pornography as a definition of truly exciting materials. She says "Pornography is not polite- that's one of the reasons it's continually under attack. To be effective, sexually explicit writing must break society's rules. That's why most attempts to create sweet, egalitarian erotica are misguided...for most people, very soft-core stuff just doesn't pass the wet test." Many stories in the anthology abide by this statement. There are several stories in which women are completely submissive, and several stories in which men are the submissive ones. Is this justifiable? Is it necessary to justify what turns you on?

This is an unanswerable question. Every woman must decide for herself whether or not to use pornography and what pornography to use. Choose with care; take responsibility for your orgasms!

# the True North



Look familiar? It sounds an awful lot like Rohypnol, the 'date rape' drug that has been making the rounds recently. They're advertising it in a national magazine. Unfortunately, we can't even blame it on those damn Americans. I learned from a Customs official that there are separate editions of each magazine; one for the States, one for Canada. All ads in the magazine that is for sale in your corner store are approved for Canada. So guess what? You can order the "Knock Out Formula" which 'allows you to have uninhibited sex with any girl' today! Don't miss it!

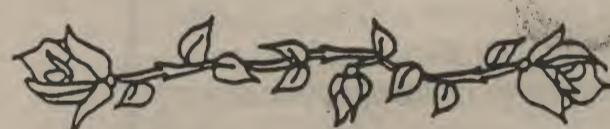
In my opinion, the combination of sexually explicit material and advertisements for such drugs is a recipe for rape. This is unacceptable, no matter what percentage of men actually go through with any kind of assault. How does Customs allow these things through? Well, as aforementioned, there is a fairly stringent code regarding the import of pornography. However, with anything that's considered borderline, it is the individual officer that must make the decision. There may be some kind of legal loophole that makes such advertising permissible.

If you do not think that this is permissible, call the RCMP's Customs and Excise division at 380-6212 and voice your disapproval. Customs also takes anonymous tips about illegal pornography at 363-3531.

It takes more space

than I have to discuss the full implications of pornographic magazines and films. It is just not possible to deal with it in one article; I haven't even touched on homosexual pornography. What I have done is attempted to clarify what's legal, what's not, and what to do if you see it. Take charge of your surroundings and refuse to accept any kind of damaging representations of sexuality.

Please direct any responses to this article to elisem@uvic.ca



"...We hate you. Sex loses all its power and magic when it becomes explicit, mechanical, overdone, when it becomes a mechanistic obsession. It becomes a bore. You have taught us more than anyone I know how wrong it is not to mix it with emotion, hunger, desire, lust, whims, caprices, personal ties, deeper relationships that change its color, flavor, rhythms, intensities."

Anais Nin, *Delta of Venus*

## "What the heck is cybersex?"

That's what I was asked when I first proposed to add a box on cybersex to this page. Cybersex, basically, is a mongrel mix of written erotica and sexual practice. It involves two or more people creating a sexual encounter with words, kind of like those stories where everyone adds a sentence. Each sentence develops the story, getting deeper and deeper into the plot. In the case of cybersex, each sentence gets more and more explicit. The general purpose of cybersex is to arouse, although there are a lot of jokes about 'typing one-handed'.

I can tell that there are readers out there who are suddenly saying to themselves, "Wait a minute.. this is a sick and anti-social practice. Who DOES this stuff?". Well, you'd be surprised. Today, due to the expanding popularity of the Internet, people of all kinds indulge. It's an escapist practice; online, you can be whoever you want, of any appearance and gender. So can your partner. You're not bound by reality. This anonymity is exceptionally freeing, and it gives you the chance to co-write intense erotica to your own design.

It's also safe sex, as long as you do two things: use a handle (this can be anything from an alternate spelling of your own name to something completely fantastic or explicit), and never give out your email address. That way, you can leave after or during an encounter, and no one will be able to harass you.

In order to be a 'good' cybersex partner, you need a good grasp of language and a creative mind. You also need a good memory. The only thing worse than trying to have cybersex with someone who misspells every second word (real-life example: "I want to grabe you're breasts". I'm not joking, either.) is doing it with someone who removes an article of clothing more than once or attempts to do something that is physically impossible. In cases like that, it's really hard to suspend your disbelief.

This is a real-life example of the first moves in a cybersex encounter, taken from a chat room in the Virtual Irish Pub (<http://www.visunet.ie>). The names of the participants have been changed (Note: anything between two asterisks (\*) is an action on the part of the person whose name appears before the colon).

Darling: TJ>Can I buy you a cyber-drink? \*places her hand on his upper thigh & smiles seductively\*

Tj: Darling>>You wanna get me drunk first? \*laughs\* I'd love a drink .\*smiles\*

Darling: \*climbs into his lap, satin skirt riding high, and snuggles up against his strong chest\*...Do you really want to leave with someone else?

Tj: Mmm.. not really. \*runs one hand down Darling's silky thigh\* \*notices her skirt is riding up\* Delicious.

Darling: \*nibbles Tj's ear\* You're delicious.

Tj: \*caresses your beautiful torso and undoes your top button\*

Darling: TJ>Can I unbutton something for you?

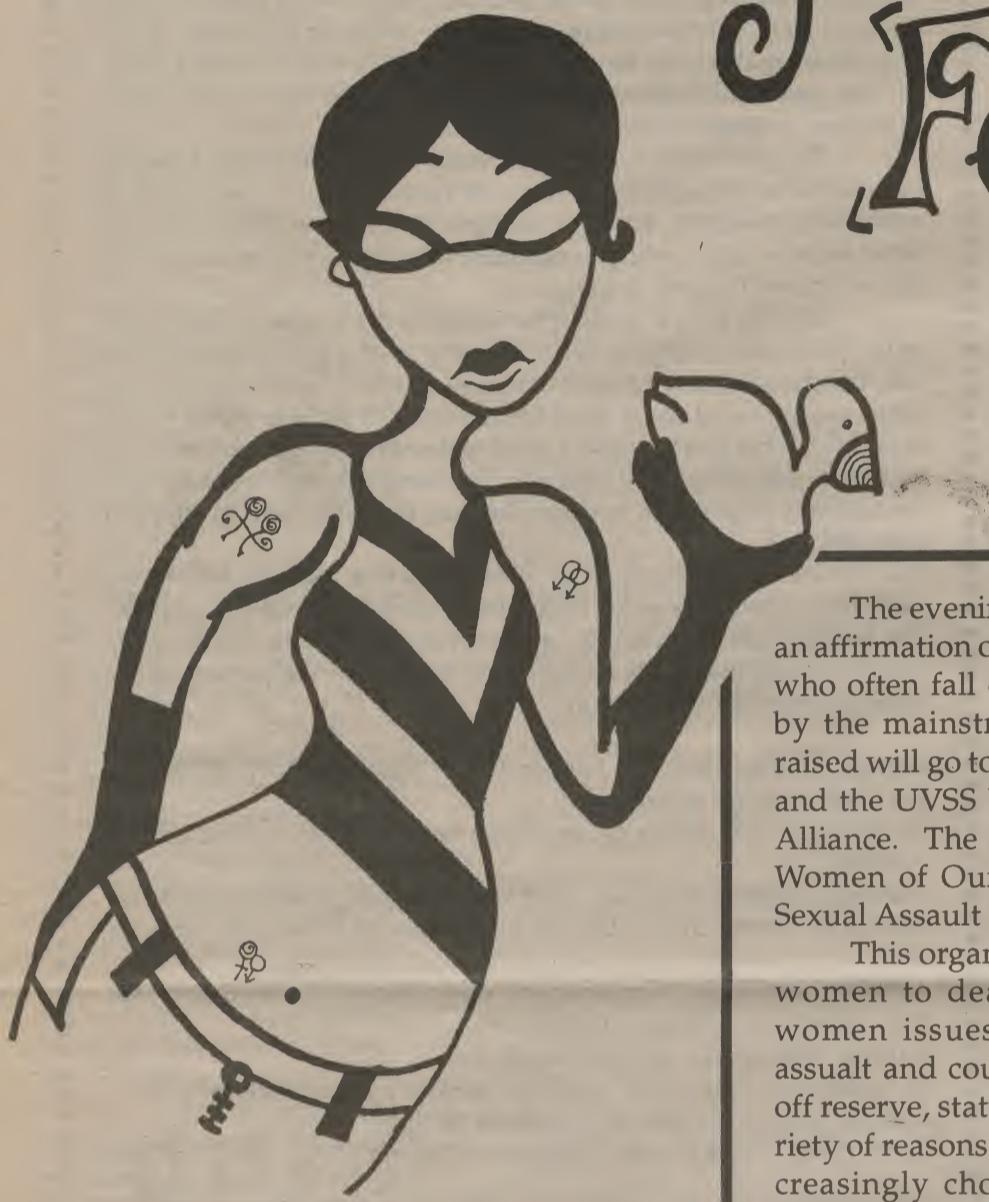
Tj: \*gulpng\* Please do,baby.. right here...\*points\*

You get the idea. It gets a lot more graphic from there. There is usually some controversy over cybersex in the V.I.P, because it's mainly for general conversation. However, there are actually chat rooms specifically geared to this sort of activity (search under 'sex chat lines' on any search engine.) Happy surfing! \*grynn\*

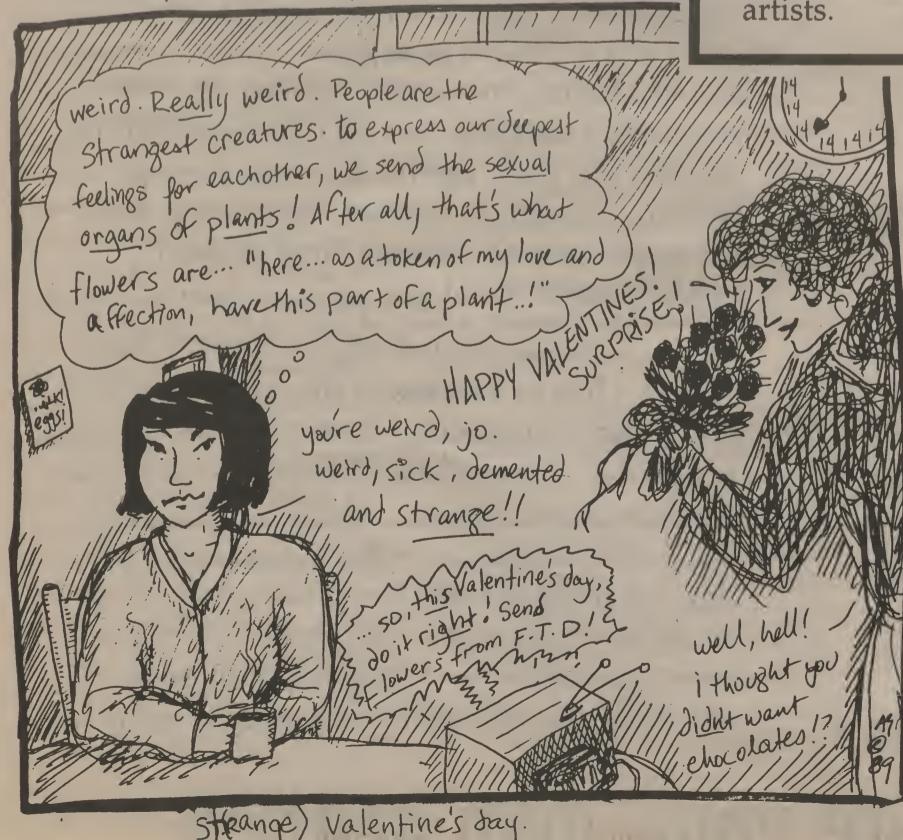
...I like sex with a man when I am on top and in control  
i'd like that guy with the beautiful eyelashes to kiss me in  
the most boring places - like an elbow as well as the  
interesting ones i fantasize about having a group  
sex experience with strangers of both sexes i like  
my lover to lick my clitoris and put her fingers in my vagina at the same  
time i like feeling my warmth between my fingers  
and my hair dangling over me i love having my  
skin on my back lightly stroked, licked,  
blown, scratched, rubbed really hard and  
my body held as though who holds it  
doesn't want to let go i like to have my partner's tongue move slowly  
up and down my vulva to then suck on my clitoris and to do it over and over again very slowly  
until i'm just ready to explode Doggie-style intercourse  
rules! i like to have sex in the morning while  
still in bed before facing the world - just wake up  
and do it I like cunnilingus i think one of the  
most intimate experiences i enjoy, the one that brings me as close to another  
woman's self as i've yet experienced, is clitoris to clitoris contact... i like  
slow sex in the hot tub i like to be on a soft towel in the tropics  
and have my entire body covered in whip cream and have a man and a  
woman slowly lick off the cream i would like to have oral  
sex with another woman outside in a field...

**Own your excitement. Write your own erotica.**

# Alternative groove Fest'



• portrait of panic



The evening will be a celebration and an affirmation of diverse groups of peoples who often fall outside of, or are opposed by the mainstream. 50% of the money raised will go to the UVSS Women's Center and the UVSS Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Alliance. The other 50% will benefit the Women of Our People Native Women's Sexual Assault Center.

This organization assists first nations women to deal with violence against women issues, wife battering, sexual assault and court accompaniment, on or off reserve, status- or non-status. For a variety of reasons first nations women are increasingly choosing culturally specific agencies such as THE WOMEN OF OUR PEOPLE to assist them. Funds raised will be directed to healing work with these women.

Approximately thirty of Victoria's local artists and fashion designers have come together to produce the anti-fashion show, which will not only showcase local talent, but is designed to challenge mainstream constructions of what we should wear, and what our bodies should look like. There will also be a silent art auction, featuring art donated by Victoria's wonderful local artists.

## ANTI-Fashion Show & Silent Art Auction

@



Friday, February 14

Doors @ 9:00, Show @ 10:00  
**DRINK SPECIALS! DOOR PRIZES!**

(This is a licensed event; ID Mandatory)

Presented by.....



The UVSS Women's Center

&

The



Tix: \$4 in advance, \$5 @ the door  
Available @ SecondHand Rose's Originals  
& EARTHENWEAR, or call (250) 721-8353



# Feminism is not a label

Jenny Fielding

## What is a feminist?

Many of my friends don't like to be called feminists because of the negative connotations they associate with that word. This belief is so widespread, in fact, that if you were to walk up to just about anyone on the street and ask him or her, "Are you a feminist?", chances are that you would get a negative response or a derogatory remark. For those of you who aren't sure what feminism is, grab a dictionary. The Funk and Wagnalls Desk Dictionary defines feminism as "a doctrine advocating the granting of the same social, political and economic rights to women as the ones granted to men." Do most of us - women and men included - not subscribe to this? I'm certain that most of the people I come into contact with everyday do.

*When you voice your opinion in order to shatter stereotypes and question gender roles, in any setting, that is feminism.*



The argument that then follows is that once an individual slaps himself or herself with a certain label, that person will be pigeonholed, unfairly shoved into a certain category. Generally speaking, as far as labels are concerned, I would be forced to agree. However, those rules do not apply here as far as I'm concerned, since I don't regard the word "feminist" as a label. Labels restrict and confine. Labels prevent people from being recognized for their individual value and achievements. Those who try to turn the word "feminist" into a derogatory "label" are merely trying to undermine and defeat us by the use of a single word, because their arguments lack any real meaning or validity.

Feminism is not a label. It is a way of life. Yours, mine, and most people's, (women's and men's) whether or not they call it by its rightful name. When you raise your daughters to be confident and independent, that is feminism. When you raise your sons to respect the contributions of individuals - including women - that is feminism. When you voice your opinion in order to

shatter stereotypes and question gender roles, in any setting, that is feminism. I don't feel that my behavior is in any way restricted or limited by this term which I have chosen to call myself. The way I see it, feminism is a word - and an experience - which empowers minds, liberates consciousness and creates healthy discussion. Where are the negative conno-

*"We may use the term "feminist" to describe ourselves, but it is we as individuals who define ourselves."*

tations in that?

So for those of you out there who are leading lives of quiet feminism (and may not have known it until now) speak up! Don't forget: we may use the term "feminist" to describe ourselves, but it is we as individuals who define ourselves, over and over again. Don't be afraid to call yourself a feminist - anyone who considers that strange obviously doesn't know how to use a dictionary - or a mirror.



## FEMINISM LIVES

# The Politics of Being Skinny

Kristin Atwood

Many people who read this will have a common initial response — they'll tell me to stop complaining. Because the complaint I have is not one that is often voiced. In this society, it seems, women are obsessed with dieting and achieving that perfectly thin and athletic body. Often the despairing cry of a woman who is dissatisfied with her body type runs something like this: "I'm too big!" or "I'm too fat!"

My complaint hits the other side of the spectrum: I'm too skinny. In all actuality, this isn't that much of a problem for me: I'd like to gain a little muscle, but at five foot one, ninety six pounds, I'm pretty happy with my shapes and sizes.

My thinness, however, seems to be a real problem for many of the people I come in contact with. For example, when I was in high school, the councilor sat me down to talk about eating disorders. I received pamphlet after pamphlet on anorexia and bulimia, was given several phone numbers for support groups and doctors, and was subject to seemingly endless lectures on

healthy eating.

Now this information is exceptionally important, and I'm sure that the councilor had only the best of intentions. I'm glad that people are not only recognizing the existence of eating disorders in epidemic proportions throughout society, but are also trying to change that fact. People are beginning to see that the ideas of perfection and ultimate beauty, no matter what the cost, are simply not acceptable for healthy living.

But I'm not anorexic. I'm not bulimic. I'm just thin.

Because of my size, I get complete strangers walking up to me to express their concern. One middle aged couple actually offered to buy me a meal when they came across me reading in Beacon Hill Park! When I declined, they didn't shrug and walk away. Instead, they persisted:

She: Oh, but you're so skinny!

He: There's hardly any meat on your bones at all!

She: We just want to make sure you get one good meal. You must be starving!

Complete strangers! People who knew nothing about me or my eating habits.

People who assumed I was starving because I'm small.

What gives any stranger the right to ask me if I'm anorexic? (It's happened.) What gives them the right to try to force feed me? I'm full grown, and if I'm anything like my mother, I'm going to stay small and skinny till I'm middle-aged. This is natural for me!

I don't mean to say no one should express concern for others. If one of my friends, or a co-worker had said, "you haven't got an inch of fat on you," or "don't you ever eat?" I wouldn't have minded. If they had told me they were worried about my health, I would have appreciated their concern. But how can it be acceptable for a completely unfamiliar person to jump in and try to help me with a problem I don't have?

This may not be the case, but it seems to me that if someone is "large," acquaintances and strangers sympathize with them, whereas if you're "small," they think they have a duty to interfere. Of course, they have the best of intentions, but we all know what the road to hell is paved with...

I dislike being asked if I eat enough. I dislike being called skinny, shrimp, squirt,

midget, or mouse. I hate the phrase "not enough meat on her bones." I hate meeting friends of friends and hearing them exclaim, "Oh! You're so little!" Yeah. I'm little. That doesn't necessarily mean I'm anorexic, or bulimic, or starving...

My point is this: with more and more attention being paid to eating disorders, people are becoming overzealous in their desire to help. Too many people are jumping into the cause blindly, on a quest to save everyone, even those of us who aren't afflicted. That energy should be used to help friends or coworkers, people you care deeply about, that do have eating disorders. Alternatively, it could be put to good use in health clinics, research, and in informing the public of the existence of these problems — and the severity of them. Rather than making assumptions and "playing the good Samaritan" to people you've never met before, wouldn't it be better to give your support to someone who is struggling with an eating disorder, and could use your help? I might be skinny, but I still have rights, and one of those is the right to privacy. I'd appreciate this world a whole lot more if that right would just be respected!

# Attack of the Average Avenger

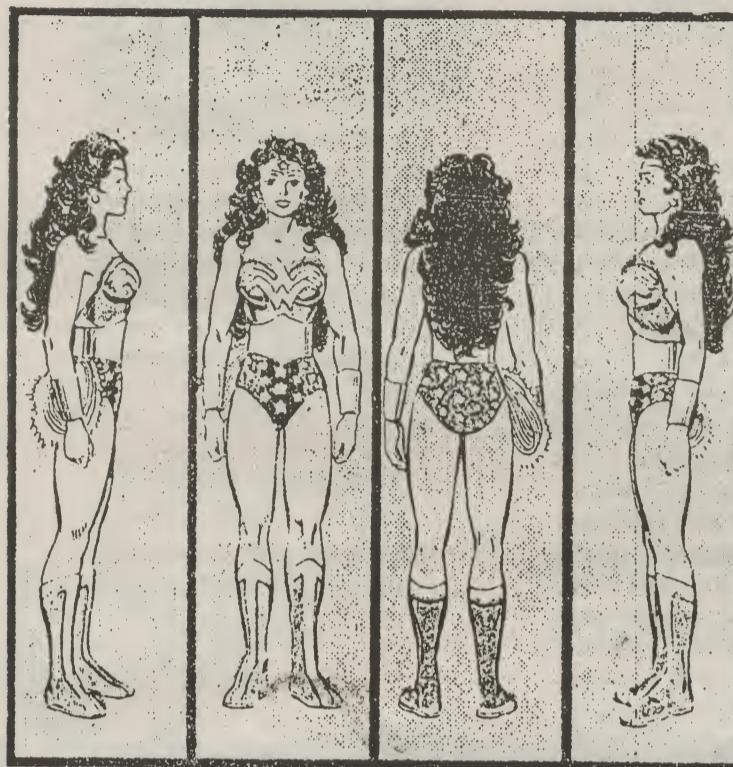
Gayle Yamamoto

When I saw the *Emily* flyers with the scribbled drawing of Wonder Woman pinned up around the Clearihue building, I was reminded of a monologue I wrote for The OTHER Woman, an artistic presentation that was performed at the Fringe Festival in 1995. It went something like this:

Why must comic book artists draw their female heroines the way they do? It seems that for a woman to be a super-heroine, she must be at least six feet tall, have super-model good looks, and, most importantly, she must have basketball-sized antigravity knockers. Must this be how all super-heroines are depicted? Is this the body that I have to want? No surgeon in the world is gonna be able to make me into some Barbie with biceps.

*How is a woman supposed to be able to fight bad guys in a strapless swimsuit, especially when there always seems to be the risk of her boobs popping out?*

And the costumes! The super-heroine's costume usually consists of barely-there swatches of spandex or fishnet placed at strategic areas. Take Wonder Woman's costume, for example. Everyone knows what her costume looks like. It's sometimes called her "star-spangled teddy." First of all, talk about impractical. How is a woman supposed to be able to fight bad guys in a strapless swimsuit, especially when there always seems to be the risk of her boobs popping out?



Art by George Pérez

Wonder Woman 87  
September, 1987  
DC Comics Inc.



Art by Mike Deodato, Jr.

Wonder Woman 91  
November, 1994  
DC Comics Inc.

Well, George Pérez, the artist for Wonder Woman in the late 80's, did a good job of making the costume look reasonably wearable. But Mike Deodato Jr., a newer artist, really knew how to make a suit of armour look like so much body paint. You heard me, that's supposed to be a modified suit of armour she's wearing. He makes George Pérez' Wonder Woman look overdressed. With Mike as artist, this costume is more like a strapless, backless, low-cut, high-cut piece of tinfoil. Now ladies, if you were Wonder Woman, would you want a piece of metal cutting into your crotch like that? I wouldn't even want an I.U.D. that close to me. At least George Pérez had the courtesy to cover up her bum.

Besides that, it's got to get chilly in that costume. And yet, I've seen storylines where some super-heroine, oh, let's call her The Stupendous Stewardess, whose costume consists of little more than a G-string and a kerchief, flies off to the North Pole to fight the Evil Nazi Polar Bears from Outer Space. And she's fighting and shooting and maiming without a single goose bump. If it were me, I'd require some kind of fully covering wet suit or something. And I'd cut off all my hair so that it wouldn't get in the way during hand-to-hand combat. And no makeup, it would only smudge. Hey, maybe I could be the model for the next big super-heroine, a super-heroine for the (so called) enlightened 90's. Yeah, she would be an average-looking woman, with average height, weight, and measurements. She could be called "The Average Avenger" or "The Plain Dame" or "The Mediocre Maiden..."

A CALL FOR ALL WOMEN CRAFTERS/ARTISANS  
who locally and hand- make their wares  
For international women's week craft fair March 3 -7.  
FREE tables  
Deadline Feb. 21.  
Contact Laurie/Jenn via Women's Centre 721-8353 or  
477-2692

"If you have no one to praise you, praise yourself."  
-Grebo proverb, Liberia

# From Confidence to Self-loathing

- in six easy steps

Kristin Atwood

We get smarter when we get older, right? No more YM clone culture for us. Educated, adult women don't buy into the hype of quizzes and love secrets; we know better...

To test the above hypothesis, I wasted four bucks on an issue of *Today's Woman*. According to them, the modern woman is obsessed with putting on weight, catching the perfect guy, and having sex. "Look 10 lbs. thinner," screamed the front cover. "10 seduction strategies men fall for every time."

According to this mag, if we don't have the perfect body, we're supposed to eat "tasty low-fat foods" and disguise our flab with miraculous wardrobe alterations. "For less than perfect rears," we are told, "there are many ways to hide our flaws." Flaws?! In this culture, it seems, if a man is not quite perfect, he is only human. If a woman shares the same characteristics, she is broken.

But that's not all! the mag features a wonderful story called "How to spy on your guy (when you think he's cheating on you.)" yep. Forget about honesty and trust. Forget about keeping the lines of communication open. Let's all become vindictive bitches who play P.I. and sneak around.

And another thing...the magazine promised a great interview with Teri Hatcher, from Lois and Clark. At first I thought, oh, good. I like her, she's a pretty good actor. I flipped to the actual article and was dismayed to see the headline, proclaiming proudly: "Super Sexy Woman!" Never mind her struggle to be successful. Never mind the obstacles she faces in everyday life. Nevermind her general outlook on life. T.V. Guide voted her the sexiest woman on television, and that's all that matters, right?

Aside from a dubiously titled article called "Firm, healthy breasts at any age," which talked about ways to prevent breast cancer (too bad it was only a page long) and another page filled with travel suggestions, the magazine is crammed full of features and columns that focus on two things: men and sex. Work's not important. Education's not important. Mental health's not important. Just men and sex.

This magazine, indeed, sends a clear message. For those astrologically inclined, there's a section on horoscopes that tells you which man to go after on which days. You can follow ten easy steps and seduce a man, or you can learn

to take control of your relationship and keep your man. You can turn your man into a sex object: "Sex, men, and size; how they measure up down there." The nicest thing about this article is that after you're done turning him into an object who's only important parts are his reproductive parts, he gets to do the same thing to you! Yipee! Notice how they all relate to the idea of being with a man? As though we aren't good enough to be single; as though we don't measure up if we're not in a nice, heterosexual relationship.

And of course, there's the ads. Ah, yes, advertising. Makeup made easy. Boost your breasts without surgery. How you can create the relationship of your dreams. Lose weight fast. In other words, do anything but be happy with yourself. Paint your face. Think of your breast size as inadequate. Depend on someone else for fulfillment. Become an obsessive dieter. Only \$29.95!

Overall, out of 83 pages, there are four that deal with something halfway worthwhile. Two are the above mentioned health and travel features, one more is dedicated to movie reviews, and the fourth is a book review column. In short this mag needs a new title: instead of *Today's Woman*, I suggest we call it *Terrible Waste*.

*In this culture, it seems, if a man is not quite perfect, he is only human. If a woman shares the same characteristics, she is broken*

I wish I could stop here. I wish I had nothing else to complain about. But as I prepared to toss the mag into my blue box, an advice column caught my attention, and I became even more upset. The first letter is entitled "My boyfriend told me he's bisexual." The woman talks about how even though they broke up, she still cares for him very much, and she wonders whether she should wait until he's ready to start a family, or let him go. A legitimate question. Not being an expert on the subject, I can only imagine that bisexual relationships can be confusing if one of the partner's isn't bisexual. I'm also assuming the woman who wrote the letter is as ignorant as I am, and so decided to seek outside advice. Nothing wrong with that.

The answer made me want to scream, however. The second sentence reads, "if you take him back, you'll be exposing yourself to sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS." Excuse me? The blatant prejudice of this statement should be obvious, but in case it's not, I'll clarify: bisexual does not mean sexually careless. It does not mean the man doesn't take precautions. It does not necessarily put him in a high risk category. There's simply

*Sadly, "Today's Woman" is only one of several mags in publication that openly contribute to the oppression of women, and encourage dependency rather than celebrating independance.*

no excuse for that kind of ignorance, nor for the ignorance that follows.

The doctor categorizes this man as "waver[ing] back and forth between men and women." So he's into both sexes. But wavering? To me, this implies that bisexuals are unable to form serious, committed relationships. In the end, she urges the woman not to reunite with her ex "under any circumstances." He has been dismissed not because the doctor knows he's abusive, irresponsible, or unfaithful, but because he's bisexual. This is formally known as discrimination. I call it stupidity.

But then again, should we dare expect more from a woman who tells another letter writer that walking out of a relationship is a good tactic to use when the lines of communication get clouded? Should we be surprised at her advice, considering she informed another woman that she should stay in an unhappy marriage simply because she has two young children and will need her husband's "support?" (FYI: lots of women with young children are successful and unmarried. I was raised in such a family, and my mother did a damn good job, thank you very much).

Sadly, *Today's Woman* is only one of several mags in publication that openly contribute to the oppression of women, and encourage dependency rather than celebrating independence. And as long as we fail to recognize what these publications are really saying with their nifty quizzes and columns, we will continue to shell out our cash and contribute - unknowingly - our support to such outlooks. So if you can't survive without a glossy to read in the tub, why not chuck the worthless, stereotypical pulp, and buy something worth reading?

## Invisible Androgyny

You are like the woman of my dreams  
in your  
damp pliant edibility  
soft and yielding  
despite meticulously wrought  
sculpted marble muscles  
you are feminine in this act  
despite  
a baffled-ness  
towards us, alien boy.  
When you curve and surge  
beneath  
my lips and tongue  
I possess you  
as I would possess

the woman of my dreams  
E.M.

# EATING DISORDERS Awareness Week

## SCARY STATS

Disordered eating behavior can lead to serious consequences, including kidney, liver, and cardiac damage, depression, irritability, anxiety, social isolation, and death.

90-95% of those who have an eating disorder are women.

80% of Canadian women have dieted by the age of 18.

42% of girls in grades one through three expressed a desire to be thinner.

14% of college-aged women vomit occasionally to control their weight.

It is estimated that this year 150,000 women will die from eating disorders in the United States alone.

## What are Eating Disorders?

Eating disorders are self-destructive eating behaviors that focus on food and weight loss and often result in severe emotional and physical problems. However, they have little to do with actual food. Starving, bingeing, purging, and overexercising are coping mechanisms. They are expressions of a number of issues, such as a lack of control in one's life.

- The British Columbia Eating Disorder Association is a non-profit organization made up of individuals who have recovered from or are struggling with an eating disorder, family, friends, and professionals who work with eating disorders. Our mandate is to serve the needs of people whose lives are affected by eating disorders. If you would like to volunteer or need more information, please phone or fax us at (250) 383-2755.

## Feed me!!!!

This is not my normal body. I have starved myself, endured plastic surgery, breast augmentation, liposuction, my back teeth have been pulled out (so my cheek bones are more prominent). I purge, exercise until I can't move, force myself to swallow laxatives by the dozen, and throw up until I pass out. My breasts are taped up and the skin on my back has been pulled together and taped so I have a cleaner line. I am obsessed with food, exercise, eating and not eating.

I am being paid to starve myself.

I am a very potent political weapon. As long as you try to look like me (which is impossible) you won't be getting in the way of greedy corporations. Who can think about pollution, IMF or corporate greed on 600 calories a day?

Corporations have figured out that we are most vulnerable to advertisements, and buying things, when we feel bad about ourselves. And so they create these ideals and images that are so far removed from reality that we will never be able to achieve it. And then they convince us that if we don't look like the ideal we are worthless. And then they offer us a product that will magically transform us. And then we buy it. STOP!

Boycott corporations that use guilt and self-hate to sell things. Support companies/products that make you feel good, not bad.



Many of us have been touched by eating disorders, whether through our own experiences or through those of our loved ones. Eating Disorders Awareness Week is designed to raise awareness around the high prevalence of eating disorders and weight preoccupation in our society, and to increase public knowledge about the connections between eating disorders, dieting, weight obsession, and cultural influences.